

WRIGHT LORIMER A SUICIDE

ACTOR DID WITH HEAD
THIRSTY IN GAS OVEN.

Responsibility allowed failure of "The Shepherd King." Left Note Blaming W. A. Brady—North Scranton Church Claims Him as Former Pastor.

Wright Lorimer, who starred for three seasons in "The Shepherd King," of which he was the author, and who since the collapse of that play had been unable to get prominent parts to fill, was found dead with his head in the oven of a gas stove in his room at 124 West Sixty-fifth street yesterday morning. The gas in the stove was turned on, as were two illuminating jets in the room, and letters which were found pinned to the plain fact that it was a suicide.

In a letter addressed "To all my friends," Lorimer blames a man in the theatrical business with whom he had business transactions as being the cause of his death. "I am sorry to hear that you are all so disappointed," he wrote, "but I am sure that the cause of my death was the failure of 'The Shepherd King' and the fact that I was unable to get prominent parts to fill."

The body was found by Lewis Shanley, a janitor in the building house. Lorimer was found lying on the floor, his head in the oven. The room was in a state of confusion, and the body was found in a state of decomposition.

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BAN ON ITS CHRISTMAS TREE

SETTLEMENT COUNCIL BARS
EAST SIDE CELEBRATION.

Kindergartners Told Not to Carry Out Plans—Sharp Controversy—Influence With Rumanian Jews at Stake—H. W. Taft and Others Involved.

A difference of opinion regarding the propriety and desirability of Christmas celebrations among some of the officials and workers of the University Settlement and allied organizations has resulted in a series of heated arguments, especially convened meetings of the University Settlement council and joint sessions of committees representing respectively the settlement and the New York Kindergarten Association. Among those who are involved in the discussion are Henry W. Taft, Hamilton Wright Mabie, president of the New York Kindergarten Association, Mrs. L. N. Phelps Stokes and Mrs. Morris Loeb, directors of the association, Robbins Gilman, head worker of the settlement, and Leo Wolfson, leader of the Federation of Rumanian Jews.

Only thirty-seven of the sixty-five children who are members of the settlement kindergarten went to the yuletide merrymaking that was held for their benefit on Thursday evening in the hall of the settlement building at 184 Eldridge street. The absence of the others, according to assertions made yesterday by persons connected with the work of the kindergarten, was due to the misguided activity of enemies of the settlement who sent to the parents of the children type-written slips saying that the "party" had been postponed. One of the former assistants of Miss Croker, the head kindergarten, learned of this in time to get word to about half of the little ones before 8 o'clock, and those whom she reached were on hand to participate in the games, songs and dances arranged by Miss Croker, and to receive the dolls, wagons, sleds and mittens donated by Mrs. Otto Kahn.

The thirty-three who were having a happy time some of the boys and girls of the neighborhood gathered on the sidewalk outside the building and made wailing remarks in which the word "Christmas" figured prominently. No attempt, however, was made to actually break up the party and the children were allowed to carry their gifts away without much interference on the part of the disgruntled ones.

As a matter of fact the strong opposition to the entertainment manifested by many of the members of the settlement clubs, all of whom are Jews, on the ground that it was a Christmas celebration and therefore not in accordance with the non-sectarian policy of the University Settlement proved to be altogether superficial.

There was no tree. The presents were distributed by Miss Croker and by Mr. Robbins Gilman, the head worker, and not by Santa Claus at all, and there was not a single allusion to Christmas or its patron saint in any of the exercises. Miss Croker had, it is true, prepared a programme which included such songs as "Christmas Bells," "Old Santa Claus Put On His Cap," "Merry, Merry Christmas" and others of a similar nature, and the children had been practising them for a fortnight. On Thursday morning, however, Miss Croker received a note from Mr. Gilman informing her that at a meeting of the University Settlement Council held on Wednesday afternoon a resolution had been passed defining the attitude of the council as strongly opposed to any party having any sectarian flavor and specifically ruling out Christmas trees, Santa Claus and Christmas games, songs and recitations.

"What shall I do?" said Miss Croker in dismay. "I don't see how I can get up anything else and I had such a lovely party planned."

Then she called up Mrs. T. N. Phelps Stokes, who is one of the best known members of the New York Kindergarten Association, under whose direction the settlement kindergarten is run, and told her troubles. Mrs. Stokes responded by going down to Eldridge street and telling Mr. Gilman that the original programme must be carried out. Mr. Gilman assured her that after the formal action of the council such a procedure would be impossible. Mrs. Stokes argued that for years it had been the custom of the New York Kindergarten Association to hold Christmas entertainments at all its branches and that these were of a purely secular character and were not religious in any sense. She did not conceal the fact that she strongly resented any interference on the part of settlement officials and maintained stoutly her position in regard to the programme planned for the evening. She also told Mr. Gilman that in Public School 20, right across the street, all sorts of Christmas parties were in progress.

Mr. Gilman went over and saw for himself Christmas trees after Christmas trees in classroom after classroom, and was greeted by ever so many of the children who knew him with "Merry Christmas" and "Happy Holidays" and he would like to see any one prevent him from having trees and carols and other things characteristic of the season.

"I am an Orthodox Jew," he explained, "and I go to the synagogue every Friday night, but I am broadminded enough to have a true holiday spirit, and I want the children to appreciate Christmas as a part of general merrymaking. I want them to understand the feeling of good will to everybody. Those songs and trees and presents help, but there is no religious end to it. That's all, and I run my school the way I think it ought to be run, and that's all there is to it."

Mr. Gilman returned to his office and called up Hamilton Mabie, president of the New York Kindergarten Association, and explained the matter to him. Mr. Mabie replied that his views coincided with those of Mrs. Stokes and that the programme arranged by Miss Croker should not be interfered with.

The head worker was sorely troubled at the attitude of the officials of the Kindergarten Association, but determined not to yield unless forced to do so. Accordingly he got into communication with Henry W. Taft, president of the Council of the University Settlement, and asked him what he should do about it all. Mr.

Taft, who had not been present at the last meeting of the council, told Mr. Gilman to carry out to the very letter the resolution dealing with "holiday parties" and Mr. Gilman explained to Mrs. Stokes that the programme must be expurgated. He then telephoned again to Mr. Mabie, who by this time had gone to Summit, N. J., but did not succeed in reaching him. Miss Croker was subsequently instructed that on no account must she permit the slightest allusion to Christmas to creep into any of her class exercises.

Mr. Gilman told a SUN reporter yesterday afternoon that the matter of the settlement and the New York Kindergarten Association, which has a membership of more than three, and that other wise from a director of the Jewish community, a very large and powerful association in which Jacob Schiff is interested. Both of the letters pronounced strongly against the holding of any Christmas entertainments in the settlement and explained that if their warnings were not heeded the inevitable result would be the withdrawing of practically all the Jewish children of the neighborhood.

Mr. Gilman went on to explain that the association with Mr. Wolfson represented had for years held aloof from the settlement and that it was not until a few weeks ago that it had made any overtures of friendship. Mr. Gilman and told him that he wanted his help in Americanizing the Rumanian Jews, who were more clamorous than the Russian and asked for the use of children and the cooperation of settlement workers.

Mr. Gilman promised to do everything he could but during a subsequent conference in respect to some of the things of the Rumanian he admitted that a Christmas celebration had been planned. Wolfson announced that all relations must end at once.

"My people would never stand for it," he said. "I could not continue them that it was not an attempt to proselytize them. It was a failure."

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"I feel very much disappointed when I heard this," said Mr. Gilman, "for we have been trying hard to get in touch with these people, but I did not know what to do about it because I was convinced that they had just declared itself in favor of the custom of having Christmas parties."

While the Rumanian has been a source of discord in settlement affairs for more than two years, in November, 1910, he said, some of the children who had attended the school of the settlement and had a sort of advice board semi-annually had come to him and begged him to abolish the Christmas festivities because the mothers of the children looked upon them as religious ceremonies and did not like them. Upon being informed later by Miss Croker that the children's mothers did not care for them and would not prove it, he let the celebration go on.

In the spring of the year he took the matter up again, however, so strenuously that Mr. Gilman wrote to Mr. Mabie asking that he should be allowed to preside over the New York Kindergarten Association in the way of adjusting the difficulty.